You are the union! Every industry, every type of work Unifor represents workers in every major industry and sector of the economy. Diversity is one of our greatest strengths. We are the largest union in the private sector, and we also proudly represent public sector workers. Unifor members work in fishing, farming, health care, retail, mining, telecommunications, office and professional work, construction, transportation, energy, auto, manufacturing, security... and the list goes on. Every Unifor has its own issues, but we all want healthy and safe workplaces, dignity and respect on the job, and a decent wage so we can care for our families.

A worker-run union... Every Unifor member has an equal right to say what they think the union ought to be doing, to debate issues, to elect representatives, to run in an election, and to vote on key union decisions. As a union member, you vote for: • Your steward/committee person (they are the union’s front-line and you can get to them with questions and issues) • Your bargaining committee (they represent you in negotiations with management on wages, working conditions and benefits) • Your local officer (a Financial Secretary, Recording Secretary, Unit Chairperson – they carry out the responsibilities and priorities of the local union) • Your delegates (they attend Regional and National Councils where the union’s priorities, principles, activities and finances are debated and voted on where we discuss industry changes, government policies and bargaining strategies.) Use your voice, use your vote!

Know your union 10 things you can do to get to know your local union 1. Attend local union meetings. This is where decisions are made and priorities set. 2. Attend an event sponsored by your local. For example, an International Women’s Day event (March 8th), an info session, a United Way fundraiser, a workshop on Building Respectful Workplaces, Labour Day. 3. Join a committee. What issues matter to you? Health and safety? Women’s issues? The environment? Pride? Committees connect the dots between the workplace, the community, and the world. 4. Read your local union newsletter and check out the local website. Contribute a letter or an article if there’s an issue or opinion you want to see covered. 5. Check out Unifor’s Unifor.net website to find out what workings in other parts of the country are saying and learn about campaigns on workers’ rights and social justice. 6. Follow your local and national union on social media to stay updated on the latest news and campaigns as we help amplify the work being done across Canada. 7. Consider becoming a steward, or run in an election for another position in the workplace or local. 8. Take a union course. We offer one day, three-day, and week-long programs on a whole host of issues, from bargaining, to human rights, to health and safety and much, much more. See www.uniforeducation.org for course descriptions and schedules. 9. Talk union. Ask questions about how the union got started in your workplace. What was it like before the union? What difference has the union made? How has the union itself changed over the years? What could we do to make the union stronger, more relevant? 10. Read your collective agreement. Read your local union by-laws. Read the Unifor Constitution. If there’s something you don’t understand, or something you don’t agree with, find someone who will help you sort it out. Don’t like it, get involved to try and change it. If you do what you read, get involved to support it and make it even better!

Local union meetings: why should you go? It’s your union, and these are your meetings. Be part of the decision-making process, find out what’s going on, meet people from other departments or workplaces, share your concerns and get information about workplaces and community issues. Union meetings are held regularly (usually once a month). If you’re not sure how to participate, sit with someone who can explain how things work, or check out “11 Tips for Meetings” at www.unifor.org/en/member-resources Hey bro... Hey bro...: lots of unrelated people in the union call each other “brother” or “sister.” Why? First, because historically union organizers needed to protect workers’ anonymity and keep management from saying on union meetings. But perhaps more importantly, at the heart of it, we care about each other. Hey hey, ho ho, what’s with all the protests? Most union activists would rather spend their free time doing something other than carrying picket signs, and facing police lines. But since the late 19th century, that is what we have had to do. We have listened to our issues and made some noise, then we would not have been able to successfully win a national health care program, and child care programs, or win the 15-day public pension plan. Without police power and protest, we wouldn’t have the eight hour work day or 40 hour work week. We wouldn’t have safety regulations for dangerous occupations. We wouldn’t have worker’s comp for when people get injured doing their job. All that we have, we’ve had to win. And it’s worth making noise about.

Know who to call Have a workplace issue? Get a catchphat? Contact your union. Unifor: Workers United! Name: Phone (cell): Email: Phone (home): Name: Phone (cell): Email: Keep the pocket guide to Unifor handy. Together, we can make workplaces safer and healthier.

The bigger picture Unions build strong communities “High rates of unionization lead to greater income equality, lower unemployment and inflation, higher productivity and supplier adjustments to economic shocks.”—World Bank Report That’s right, when unions are stronger, it benefits all workers. Workers who are paid decently can afford to participate in the economy, creating more jobs and paying more in taxes to support public services like health care, schools, police services, roads and public transport. This benefits everyone and strengthens our communities. Unions are the only reason many industries have high wages and benefit packages — we set the standard that others follow for non-union members. By negotiating good wages and pensions unions helped create the rise of Canada’s middle class. Did you know that in countries where the majority of workers are unionized: 1. There is lower crime and less violence. 2. Workers are more involved in their workplace. 3. Workplaces are more open and respectful of one another. 4. There is higher (and in some cases higher) productivity. 5. Workplace mortality and accidents (catchpahs and wages) are higher right across the board (for union and non-union workers). 6. They score highest on the “world happiness index”.—UN Women Report The evidence is in: If we want to increase income equality and social equality for all then we need strong labour rights. Governments that want to turn back the clock on workers’ rights are clearly siding with the 1%. Go global Connecting with other unions in our community and in our world is a big part of what makes us stronger and smarter. Together we can monitor multinationals, track industry changes, and share resources and strategies. Discover what workers in other countries do the same job as you (maybe even the same employer) are saying and doing about workplaces and community issues at www.unifor.org/international (Tools & Resources).

Committed to social justice Our union’s roots are in the workplace, but our broader focus is on our communities. Our call on governments at all levels: • Strengthen labour laws so workers have the tools to challenge employer exploitation. • Improve human rights laws so that all workers, whatever their race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability and age are recognized for the work they do. • Protect education, health, care, childcare and eldercare. • Protect workers from job displacement, precarious employment and underpayment. • Provide sufficient public funding for social services. • Expand the Canada Child Benefit. • Provide public health for all workers. • Reduce the cost of living. • Protect Canada jobs through meaningful investment and infrastructure (and stop exporting our raw materials and jobs). Unifor: A union for everyone. Unifor is a modern approach to unions: we are taking the best from our history and pushing forward to make the future of the union secure. We advocate for all workers—employed and unemployed—because together we are stronger. All workers need safe and healthy workplaces, decent time off the job, a living wage, job security, and the chance to have a decent standard of living. And we need respect and fair treatment from the workplace, the government and international relations. We can be more effective if we can make sure that what works for us works for all. —Jerry Dias, Unifor National President

What do I need to know about belonging to a union? 1. With a union, you have more rights on the job, are more protected against employer exploitation and discrimination, and are likely earning more money than you would be if you didn’t have a union. These things probably matter to you. 2. With a union you have a voice in the workplace (and in the union). This guide will explain how to use your voice (and your vote). 3. You’re paying dues. (You should know why it’s worth it.)

Everywhere: Unifor represents workers all across Canada. Whether you’re in St. John’s, Kitchener, Yellowknife, or anywhere in between, you’re connected to a network of people who actively care about workers’ rights.
For Collective bargaining: how does it work?

Every contract is a success - often it's three years. Towards the end of a contract, your elected Bargaining Committee will ask for your input on what needs to change in the agreement. They might call a special proposal meeting or conduct a survey. The union will also conduct a strike mandate vote. This is a vote to determine how strongly the membership supports the union's contract demands and their Bargaining Committee.

Unifor staff help by providing information on other collective agreements, on industry trends, and on the employer's finances. The local also reviews past contract negotiations to find out how strongly the membership supports the union's contract demands and to find solutions that not only fix the problem, but prevent it from happening again.

What's a collective agreement?

A collective agreement is a contract that does two things:

1. It improves on the bare minimum set out in basic employment law. It outlines issues, benefits, vacation entitlements and includes fair processes for things like whistleblowing, promotions, transfers, and more. It replaces employer favouritism and secrecy. In most cases unionized workers earn more than non-union workers in the same industry and are more likely to have negotiated benefits such as medical, dental and pension plans.

2. It outlines the steps to take if you or your coworkers have to strike to win a fair settlement.

Committee returns to the negotiating table or possibly goes on strike to force the employer to return to the negotiating table or possibly goes on strike to force.

Every collective agreement includes a process – the grievance – that we can follow if the employer doesn’t live up to what’s written in the agreement. Without a union, workers are on their own if they have a workplace problem.

Collective bargaining: how does it work?

For the plain text representation, please refer to the provided content.